

AMERICAN HERITAGE RIVER

RIO GRANDE



BACKGROUND

The American Heritage Rivers (AHR) initiative was announced in January 1997 under Executive order 13061, to help communities revitalize their rivers and riverbanks. AHR is an umbrella organization designed to more effectively use the federal government's many resources, and was spearheaded by the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) under the Clinton administration. Fourteen rivers have been designated as American Heritage Rivers.



Each river has the specific support of a "lead" federal agency. The lead agency provides a "River Navigator," an individual who helps communities implement projects related to the three AHR objectives: historical and cultural preservation, environmental protection, and economic revitalization.



GENERAL INFORMATION

The City of El Paso Texas, is directing its energies toward creating a 42-mile Rio Grande Riverpark, with support from the National Park Service, connecting significant sites along the river corridor through a series of trails, cultural destinations, and community parks. Also historical markers and recreational values shared throughout the river communities.



In response to the American Heritage Rivers Initiative, communities along the Rio Grande, from El Paso to Brownsville, joined together through an Inter-Jurisdictional Agreement to nominate the Texas portion of the Rio Grande as a Heritage River.

Local community organizations, such as Los Caminos del Rio and the El Paso Community Foundation have joined with state and federal agencies to preserve some of the history of the old route between Laredo, Texas, and the lower Rio Grande Valley, Los Caminos del Rio.

The Flow of the
Mighty River
Down to the Gulf of
Mexico



*AHR Art Contest Grand Prize Winner
"El Paso Borders" by Jose Rivera
El Paso Bowie High School*



*Rio Grande/
Rio Bravo Basin Coalition*

**For more information on
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Initiative" Contact:
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Partners

**City of El Paso
City of Brownsville
City of Laredo
Rio Grande Institute
Rio Grande/Rio Bravo Basin
Coalition
County of El Paso
National Park Service
U.S. Army Corps of
Engineers
Rio Bravo Nature Center
Foundation
Economic Development
Administration
U.S. Department of
Agriculture
NRCS
City of Eagle Pass
City of Roma
Housing and Urban
Development
Department of Interior**



FACTS ABOUT THE RIO GRANDE

- The river collects rain, snowmelt, and spring water from an area about 335,500 square miles in size, equal to 11 percent of the continental United States and 44 percent of Mexico. The Rio Grande drainage basin includes parts of three states in the United States and five states in Mexico.
- From El Paso to the Gulf of Mexico-a distance of about 1,250 miles- the Rio Grande forms the boundary between the U.S. and Mexico.
- In a sense, The Rio Grande is two streams. It dwindles to nearly nothing near Presidio TX. Water from the Rio Conchos, coming out of Mexico, sustains its journey to the Gulf.

Historical Names for the Rio Grande

1540--Rio de Nuestra Senora
1568--River of May
1581--Rio de Nuestra Senora de la Concepcion
1598--Rio Bravo
1582--Rio del Norte
1598--Rio Grande
1695--Rio de San Buenaventura del Norte
1700--Rio del Norte y de Nuevo Mexico